

March 13, 2012  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Senate Bill 352  
Testimony to support collective bargaining

My name is Eneida Arzola. I have been a license exempt childcare provider with Care4Kids for 9 years. I provide care for my sister's daughter – she is 10 years old. I have helped to raise all of my sister's children through the Care4Kids program, and I want to continue doing so until they no longer qualify.

Unfortunately, I cannot attend the public hearing for our collective bargaining bill because the hour that the Committee has chosen conflicts with my schedule as a provider – between 2:30 and 4pm, I am picking up my after-school children. Now that we childcare providers with Care4Kids have our union, I would like for my voice to be heard through this medium.

It is important to me that you know I educate the children in my care. Children between the ages of 1 year and 2 ½ years old are potty-trained, encouraged to walk and be coordinated, how to eat well and use utensils. I teach older children how to bathe themselves, how to write their own name, numbers, how to dress themselves. School-aged children are helped with homework. I teach them many things.

There are many improvements to Care4Kids that can be made. Care4Kids should raise the age at which they remove children from the program, from 12 to 15. I am a foster parent, and the Department of Children and Families does not allow a 12-year-old child to be left at home unattended for hours at a time. This is especially a problem in the summer, when they have school vacations and parents need to continue to go to work. Care4Kids and DCF need to work together for the well-being of the children in our care.

Care4Kids also needs to raise the subsidy rates because what they pay does not match the work of a childcare provider. I provide care for my niece between 4-11:30pm, when my sister gets off from her job at a hospital. My subsidy check from Care4Kids is \$9/month because the rest goes to a daycare center that my niece attends. This needs to change.

Collective bargaining is important because if we do not pass this law, Care4Kids will not make changes that reflect our input as providers. The program needs to change to support the people who provide care for children.

Please vote YES for SB 352.

Eneida Arzola  
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